

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A system for the exchange of at least one raw material, the system comprising:

5 means for data storage having a database thereon, the database comprising a name identifier and at least one criterion associated with each of the at least one raw material;

means for processing the database, the processing means operably connected to the data storage means;

a first terminal having a means for data entry; and

10 means for communication between the processing means and the first terminal, the communication means operably connected to the processing means and the first terminal, such that a user may enter by the data entry means of the first terminal a selected name identifier or a selected criterion for communication via the communication means of the entered data to the processing means for subsequent selection from the data storage means
15 by the processing means of one of the at least one raw materials matching the entered data.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one raw material comprises at least one ingredient.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the at least one ingredient is of the type used in one or more of the group of industries consisting of the food, beverage, cosmetic, personal care,
20 and pharmaceutical industries.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one criterion comprises at least one classification.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one criterion comprises at least one certification.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one criterion comprises at least one registration.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one raw material is of the type useful in industries having more than one SIC code associated therewith.

5 8. The system of claim 1, wherein in the at least one raw material is of the type useful in goods having more than one HTS index associated therewith.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the first terminal comprises a means for data retention for receipt of database information for the selected at least one raw material.

10 10. The system of claim 9, wherein the data retention means comprises a storage means.

11. The system of claim 9, wherein the data retention means comprises a display means.

12. The system of claim 9, wherein the data retention means comprises a printing means.

15 13. The system of claim 1, wherein the first terminal comprises a means for receipt of a user identifier, such user identifier required for receipt of information about the selected at least one raw material.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the user identifier includes a password.

20 15. The system of claim 13, wherein the user identifier includes an electronic signature.

16. The system of claim 1, further comprising: a second terminal operably connected to the communication means.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the at least one name identifier and the at least one criterion of the at least one raw material in the database originate from the second terminal as communicated by the communication means and processed by the processing means to the database.

18. The system of claim 16, wherein the first and second terminals communicate via the communication means.

19. A method of exchange of at least one raw material, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the system of claim 1;

establishing communication via the communication means between the first terminal and the processing means;

entering at the data entry means of the first terminal either a name identifier or an at least one criterion;

with the processing means, selecting one of the at least one raw materials from the database that satisfied the data entered; and

communicating the selected at least one raw material to the first terminal from the processing means via the communication means.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the at least one raw material is of the type useful in industries having more than one SIC code associated therewith, such that the selected at least one raw material is not depended upon SIC code.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the system further comprises a second terminal operably connected to the communication means, the method further comprising the step of:

communicating from the second terminal via the communication means to the processing means at least one name identifier and at least one criterion for at least one new raw material;

5 and

adding with the processing means to the database the at least one name identifier and the at least one criterion for the at least one raw material to the database.

22. A system for the exchange of raw materials, comprising:

data storage means;

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processing means operably connected to the data storage means;

data representing the at least one raw material, the data representative of at least one criterion associated with the at least one raw material, the data stored in the data storage means;

a first terminal having a data entry means;

an electronic certificate representing the at least one criterion; and

15 communication means operably connected to the processing means and the first terminal.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the at least one criterion comprises at least one certification.

24. The system of claim 22, wherein the at least one criterion comprises at least one registration.

20 25. The system of claim 22, wherein the at least one criterion comprises at least one characteristic.

26. The system of claim 23 wherein the at least one criterion further comprises at least one registration.

27. The system of claim 24, wherein the at least one criterion further comprises at least one characteristic.

5 28. The system of claim 23, wherein the at least one criterion further comprises at least one characteristic.

29. A method for exchange of at least one raw material, the method comprising the steps of :

providing the system of claim 22;

10 establishing communication with the communication means between the first terminal and the processing means;

entering a desired criterion with the data entry means of the first terminal;

selecting with the processing means the at least one raw material stored in the data storage means that matches the entered criterion; and

15 communicating the electronic certificate associated with the selected at least one raw material with the communication means to the first terminal.

30. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of:

communicating the selected at one raw material to the first terminal.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the system further comprises a second terminal
20 operably connected to the communication means, the method further comprising the step of:

communicating the electronic certificate associated with the selected at least one raw material with the communication means to the second terminal.

32. A system for the maintenance and transfer of information about at least one raw material, the system comprising:

means for data storage having a database thereon, the database comprising a name identifier and at least one characteristic, registration, or certificate associated with the at least one raw material;

means for processing the database, the processing means operably connected to the data storage means;

a first terminal having a means for data entry;

an electronic record representing the at least one characteristic, registration, or certificate associated with the at least one raw material;

means for communication operably connected to the processing means and the first terminal, such that a user may communicate the electronic record representing the at least one characteristic, registration, or certificate associated with the at least one raw material to a second terminal with the communications means .

33. The system of claim 32, wherein the electronic record comprises an electronic signature.

34. The system of claim 33, wherein the at least one raw material comprises at least one ingredient.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein the at least one ingredient is of the type used in one or more of the group of industries consisting of the food, beverage, cosmetic, personal care, and pharmaceutical industries.

36. The system of claim 32, further comprising a means to validate the system to ensure its accuracy, reliability, and ability to discern the alteration or invalidity of the electronic record representing the at least one characteristic, registration, or certification associated with the at least one raw material.

5 37. The system of claim 36, wherein the system generates a human readable version of the at least one characteristic, registration, or certification represented by the electronic record that is capable of human inspection, review, and copying.

10 38. The system of claim 37, wherein the system further comprises a means for protecting the electronic record representing the at least one characteristic, registration, or certification associated with the at least one raw material for a defined period of time so that the electronic record representing the at least one characteristic, registration, or certification associated with the at least one raw material can be retrieved from the data storage means using the processing means.

15 39. The system of claim 32, further comprising a means for tracking the electronic record representing the at least one characteristic, registration, or certificate associated with the at least one raw material for every raw material contained in an end product.

40. A method for maintaining and transferring information about at least one raw material, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the system of claim 33;

20 establishing communication with the communication means between the first terminal and the processing means;

selecting the at least one raw material;

communicating the electronic record representing the at least one characteristic, registration, or certificate associated with the at least one raw material to the second terminal using the communications means.

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